

The Tragedie of Hamlet

Ham. Any thing but to th purpose; you were sent for, and there is a kind of confession in your lookes, which your modesties haue not craft enough to cullour, I know the good King and Queene haue sent for you.

Ros. To what end my Lord?

Ham. That you must teach me: but let me coniure you, by the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancie of our youth, by the obligation of our euer preserued loue; and by what more deare a better proposer can change you withal, be euen and direct with mee whether you were sent for or no.

Ros. What say you?

Ham. Nay then I haue an eie of you, if you loue me hold not off.

Gyl. My Lord we were sent for.

Ham. I will tell you why so shall, my anticipation preuent your discouerie & your secrecie to the King and Queen moult no feather, I haue of late, but wherefore I know not, lost all my mirth, forgon all custome of exercises, and indeede it goes soe heavily with my disposition, that this goodly frame the earth, seems to me a sterill promontorie, this most excellent Canopie the aire, looke you, this braue ore-hanged firmament, this maiesticall roose fretted with golden fire, why it appeareth nothing to mee but a foule and pestilent congregation of vapours. What peece of worke is a man, how noble in reason, how infinit in faculties, in forme and moouing, how expresse and admirable in action, how like an Angell in apprehension, how like a God: the beautie of the world; the parragon of Annimales, & yet to me, what is this quintessence of dust? man delights not mee nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seeme to say so.

Ros. My Lord there was no such stufte in my thoughts.

Ham. Why did yee laugh then, when I said man delights not me.

Ros. To thinke my Lord if you delight not in man, what Lenton entertainment the plaiers shall receiue from you, wee coted them on the way, and hether are the coming to offer you seruice.

Ham. He that plaies the King shall be welcome, his Maiestie shall haue tribute on mee, the aduenterous Knight shall vse his foyle and targer, the louer shall not sing gratis, the humorous man shall end his part in peace and the Ladie shall say her mind freely: or the blanke verse shall haue for't. What players are they?

Ros. Euen those you were wont to take such delight in, the Tragedians of the Citie.

Ham.

Prince of Denmarke.

Ham. How chanceth it the trauaile? their residence both in reputation and profit was better both waies.

Ros. I thinke their inhibition, comes by the meanes of the late innouation.

Ham. Do the hold the same estimation they did when I was in the Citie? are they so followed?

Ros. No indeede are they not.

Ham. It is not very strange, for my Vncle is King of Denmarke, & those that would make mouths at him while my father liued, giue twentie, fortie, fiftie, a hundred duckets a peece, for his Picture in little: s'bloud there is something in this more then natural, if Philosophy could find it out.

A flourish.

Gyl. There are plaiers.

Ham. Gentlemen you are welcome to *Elsonoure*, your hands, come then th'apportenance of welcome is fashion and ceremonie; let mee comply with you in this garb: let my extent to the Plaiers, which I tell you must shewe fairely outwards, should more appeare like entertainment then yours? you are welcome: but my Vncle-father, and Aunt-mother, are deceaued.

Gyl. In what my deare Lord.

Ham. I am but mad North North-west; when the wind is Southerly, I know a Hawke, from a Hand-saw.

Enter Polonius.

Pol. Well be with you Gentlemen.

Ham. Hark you *Gyldesterne*, and you to, are each eare a hearer, that great babie as you see is not yet out of his swadling clouts.

Ros. Happily he is the second time come to them, for they say an old man is twice a child.

Ham. I will prophetic that he comes to tell me of the Plaiers; marke it, you say right fir a Monday morning t'was then indeed.

Pol. My Lord I haue newes to tell you.

Ham. My Lord I haue newes to tell you: when *Rossius* was an Actor in Rome.

Pol. The Actors are come hether my Lord.

Ham. Buz, buz,

Pol. Vpon my honour.

Ham. Then came each Actor on his Ass.

Pol. The best actors in the world, either for Tragedie, Comedie, Historie, Pastorall, Pastoral-Comicall, Historical-Pastorall, seeme indeuidable.